



15c

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

JUNE
NO. 222

BATMAN

HERE
THEY
COME!

ONE OF
THEM IS
DEAD—
BUT
WHICH
ONE?

**DEAD TIL PROVEN
ALIVE**

THE CLUE
IS ON THEIR
ALBUM COVER!

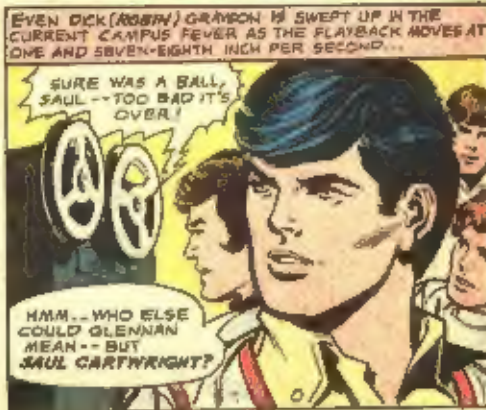
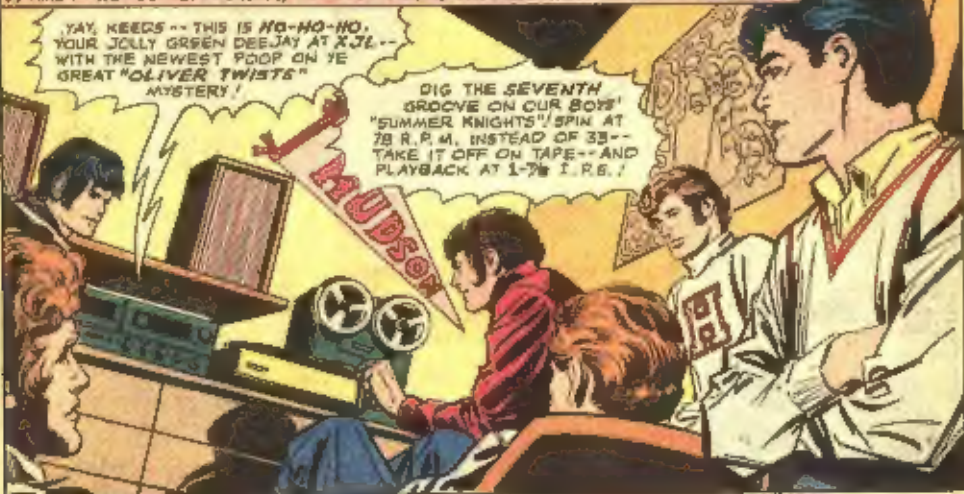
BACK TOGETHER AGAIN!

BATMAN and ROBIN

DEAD... TILL PROVEN ALIVE!

STORY: FRANK ROBBINS • ART: IRVY NOVICK & DICK GIORDANO

A TIME AT HUDSON UNIVERSITY, WHEN STUDYING IS THE LAST THING ON STUDENTS' MINDS!...



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AT LAST, DICK THE GREAT SKEPTIC,
BREAKS DOWN! NOW DO YOU
BELIEVE SAUL'S DEAD?

WE INTERRUPT
WITH A LATE
BLAST!

THE "TWISTS" ARE COMING
TO GOTHAM CITY-- MAYBE IN
A PINK SUBMARINE-- TO
PROVE THAT SAUL IS ALIVE
AND WELL, AND LIVING
IN OL' LUNNON TOWN!

WOW! IF
"SAUL" IS ALIVE
AND IF ONLY
THE "TWISTS"
COULD APPEAR
HERE AT
HUDSON U.S.

DICK! YOUR
GUARDIAN, BRUCE
WAYNE, IS A BIG
WHEEL IN GOTHAM--
MAYBE HE COULD
SWING IT AS A
FAVOR FOR YOU?

IS "DICK GRAYSON"
I HAVE TO PLAY IT
COOL, BUT AS
ROBIN-- I'M
REALLY INTERUED
BY THIS
MYSTERY!

LATER, AT
WAYNE
FOUNDATION,
WHERE
BRUCE
[BATMAN]
WAYNE HANDLES
HIS "COVER"
ENTERPRISES...

AS A MAJOR STOCKHOLDER
IN OPEN RECORDS, THIS
PUBLICITY HAS BEEN GOOD
BUSINESS, BUT AS BATMAN--
I DON'T WANT TO BE PARTY
TO A HOAX!

GOING SAUL GRAYSON
ALIVE... OR DEAD?
PRING!

AS DICK RELAYS HIS CLASSMATES' REQUEST...

I'D LOVE TO, DICK--
BUT YOU KNOW THE
FOUR "ORPHANS"
ARE AN INDEPENDENT
BUNCH! THEY DON'T
'PUSH' EASILY...

COULD YOU
INVITE THEM
TO BE YOUR
GUESTS WHILE
THEY'RE IN
GOTHAM?

I DON'T LIKE TO
"INFLUENCE" PEDDLE,
FELLAS-- BUT I'LL GIVE
IT A TRY!

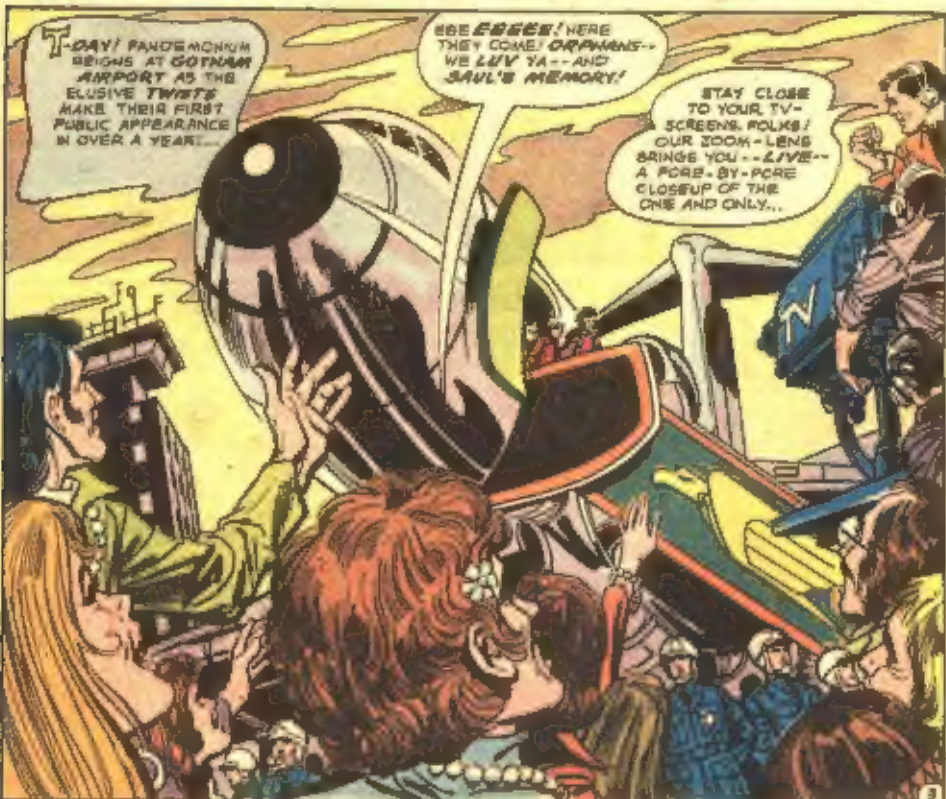


THEN, GIVE ME A CRACK AT PERSUADING THEM! I'LL COME DOWN SPECIAL FOR THE WEEK END...

IT'LL MEAN RE-OPENING WAYNE MANOR-- NO ROOM HERE IN THE PENTHOUSE FOR THOSE MAD MODE! OKAY, WILL DO...



THERE'S AN ADDED INCENTIVE WITH THE "TWISTS" UNDER ONE ROOF--AS BATMAN, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO SPOT WHETHER SAUL IS A PHONEY!



T-DAY! PANDEMONIUM REIGNS AT GOTHAM AIRPORT AS THE ELUSIVE TWISTS MAKE THEIR FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE IN OVER A YEAR...

EEEEEEEE! HERE THEY COME! ORPHANS-- WE LIV YA--AND SAUL'S MEMORY!

STAY CLOSE TO YOUR TV-SCREENS, FOLKS! OUR ZOOM-LENS BRINGS YOU--LIVE--A FORB-BY-PCRE CLOSEUP OF THE ONE AND ONLY...



...SAUL
CARTWRIGHT!

"HI-FOLKS! SORRY TO
DISAPPOINT MY FAITHFUL
"MOURNERS," BUT--
AS YOU CAN PLAINLY
SEE...



WHILE PARKED AWAY FROM THE SWIRLING MOB, BEHIND
A HANGAR...

SURE LOOKS LIKE SAUL--
SOUNDS LIKE HIM!
BUT IS HE--?

DONNO, DICK--PLASTIC-
SURGERY AND VOICE-
TRAINING CAN DO
WONDERS--IF HE'S A
STAND-IN FOR THE
RUMORED "DEAD"
SAUL!



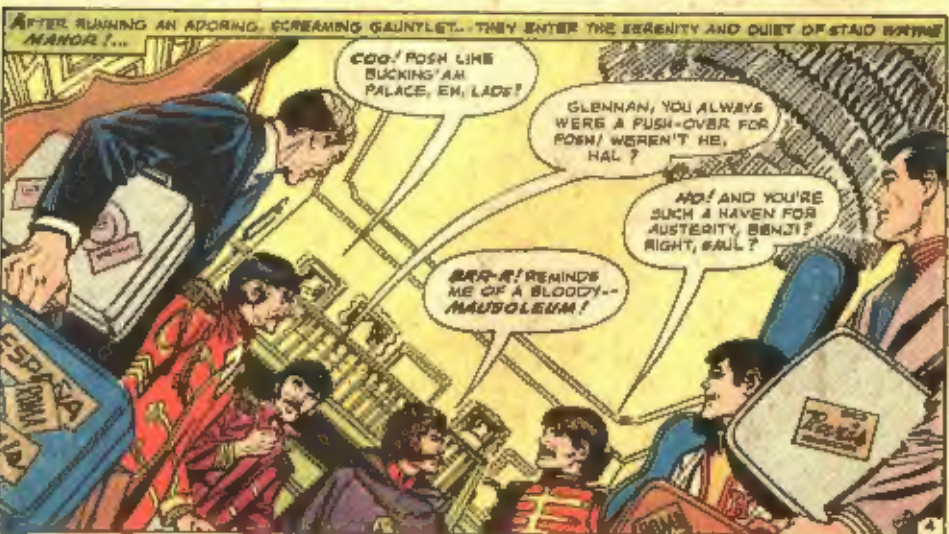
AS A PROTECTIVE POLICE GORDON LEADS THE
HARRIED TWISTS THROUGH THEIR ARDENT FANS...

WHICH WE MAY FIND OUT
SOON, DICK! COMMISSIONER
GORDON HAS EXTENDED
MY INVITATION TO THEM...



THEY'RE ALL YOURS
NOW, BRUCE! TAKE
'EM AWAY!

THANKS, COMMISSIONER
GORDON! WAYNE MANOR
WILL GIVE THEM THE PEACE
AND PRIVACY THEY'LL NEED
BETWEEN PUBLIC
APPEARANCES!



AFTER RUNNING AN ADORING, SCREAMING GAUNTLET... THEY ENTER THE SERENITY AND QUIET OF STAUD WAYNE
MANOR!...

COO! POSH LIKE
BUCKING'AM
PALACE, EH, LADE!

GLENNAN, YOU ALWAYS
WERE A PUSH-OVER FOR
POSH! WEREN'T HE,
HAL?

NO! AND YOU'RE
SUCH A HAVEN FOR
AUSTERITY, BENJI?
RIGHT, SAUL?

BRR-R! REMINDS
ME OF A BLOODY--
MAUSOLEUM!

FUNNY REACTION?
THESE BOYS COULD
BUY BUCKINGHAM
PALACE!

SAUL TALKS
LIKE HE'S
JUST RISEN
FROM THE
GRAVE!

FORGIVE THE PUT-DOWN ON
YOUR DIGGS, MR. WAYNE--DICK!
BUT THIS "DEATH-ROLE" MY
NUTTY FANS HAVE DREAMED
UP, IS GETTING TO ME!

AND WHILE YOU
SEEM THE REGULAR
SORT--YOU MIGHT
HAVE DOUBTS
TOO!

SO LET'S CLEAR THE RECORD,
RIGHT NOW! WHEN MY THREE
PARTNERS TOOK OFF FOR THE
HIMALAYAS A YEAR AGO, TO
DO THEIR THING...

...IT WASN'T TO GO INTO
MOURNING OVER MY "DEATH"
IN A CYCLE ACCIDENT
IN LONDON!

DO THEY EXPECT ME TO MAKE *SOLO*
APPEARANCES WHILE THE BACKBONE
OF OUR GROUP WAS AWAY?

I JUST DROPPED OUT OF
SIGHT TO DREAM UP NEW
ARRANGEMENTS AND
STUFF, TILL THEY
RETURNED!

WE GET THE
MESSAGE, SAUL--
NOBODY'LL GET
ON YOUR BACK
HERE!

ALFRED WILL
SHOW YOU TO
YOUR QUARTERS!

HE GAVE ME
JUST WHAT I
WANTED!
C'MON, BRUCE--
I'LL NEED YOUR
ASSIST!

QUICKLY EXITING INTO THE SECRET
BATCAVE ELEVATOR...

SAUL GAVE YOU--
WHAT? JUST WHAT ARE
YOU UP TO, DICK?

UP TO DISCOVERING
THE TRUTH--IF THAT
CHANCELLER, I SUGGED,
PICKED UP HIS VOICE
CLEARLY!

IN THE BATCAVE, DICK SWITCHES ON A TAPE RECORDER...

THE EAR CAN BE FOOLED, BRUCE--BUT PLAYING SAUL'S VOICE BACK THROUGH THIS SONO-ANALYZER PRODUCES A SONOGRAM--A VOICE-PATTERN PRINT AS DISTINCTIVE AS A FINGERPRINT!

BUT WHAT COMPARISON DO YOU HAVE?

THIS EARLY RECORDING OF THE AUTHENTIC SAUL CARTWRIGHT'S VOICE--LOOK!

OUR PRESENT GUEST IS A-- FRAUD! THEY'RE BOTH--DIFFERENT!

DIFFERENT, YES--BUT SO IS THE SOURCE!

THE-- SOURCE?

ONE IS A SINGING VOICE-- THE OTHER SPEAKING! THEY WOULD HAVE UNLIKE PATTERNS!

SO YOU'VE PROVED NOTHING! UNLESS-- YOU CAN GET SAUL'S PRESENT SINGING VOICE!

LATER, AT DINNER...

PLANNING TO RECORD OUR DEATHLESS WORDS FOR POSTERITY, SAUL?

ON MY MINI-RECORDER? UM--UM, MR. WAYNE-- THIS IS MY INSEPARABLE COMPANION IN CASE OF SUDDEN INSPIRATION! THEN, I SING INTO IT!

THEN, IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT...

SAUL GOT "INSPIRED" SEVERAL TIMES DURING DINNER--HIS TAPE HAS JUST THE VOICE I NEED ON IT-- A SINGING ONE!

BUT IN CASE I SHOULD BE SPOTTED--BETTER THAT ROBIN TAKES THE RAP!

HE DIDN'T EVEN STOP!

NOW, WITH LUCK-- I CAN COPY THIS OFF--AND REPLACE IT WITHOUT SAUL BEING ANY THE WISER!



AS BRUCE LIFTS THE LIMP FORM...

STILL BREATHING
GOT TO GET
HIM OUT OF
SIGHT BEFORE...

'87! WHO'S
TRIPPIN' THE
LIGHT-FANTASTIC
OUT HERE?
YOU, SAUL?

HOT ME,
GLENNAN--
I'M NO
SLEEP WALKER!
MAYBE HAL?
BENJI?

CLOSE--BUT THEY
DIDN'T SPOT US!
THIS NEEDS THE
PRIVACY OF THE
BATCAVE...

SECONDS LATER...

WHAT HAPPENED,
ROBIN?

TRIED TO
GET SAUL'S
RECORDER--
THEN SOMEONE
CLOBBERED ME--
FROM BEHIND!
I-I LOST!

MUST HAVE
BEEN SAUL--
WOKE AND
FOLLOWED
ME!

BUT WHY HIS DEPERATE
INTEREST TO GUARD
THAT RECORDER?
UNLESS HE'S TRYING
TO HIDE HIS VOICE...

...THAT COULD PROVE
HE'S NOT "SAUL"?

THE NEXT EVENING AS THEY DRESS
FOR DINNER...

THEY ALL CAME DOWN TO
BREAKFAST LOOKING
INNOCENT AS LAMBS!
AND "SAUL" STILL HAD HIS
RECORDER!

THEY MUST BE IN
CAHOOTS, DICK--BUT
THERE'S ANOTHER
WAY TO GET HIS
"SINGING" VOICE!

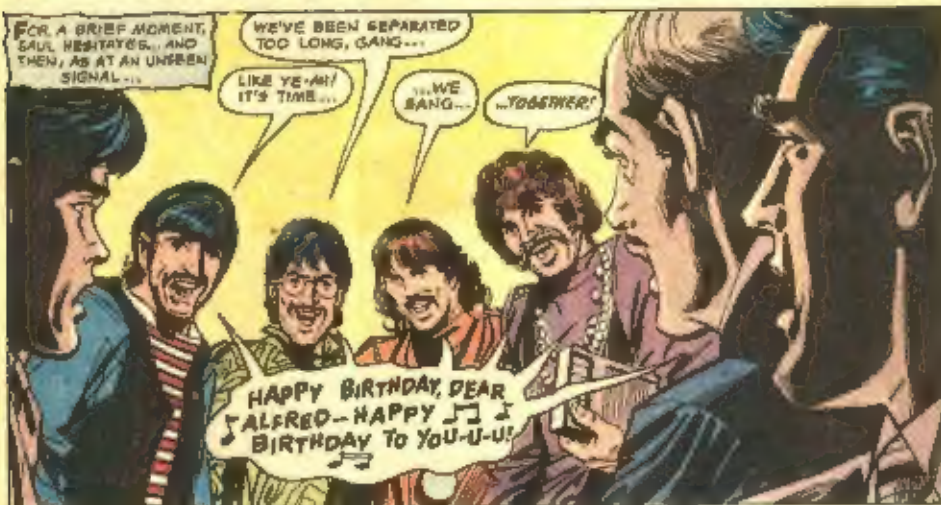
AS YOU'LL SOON
SEE...

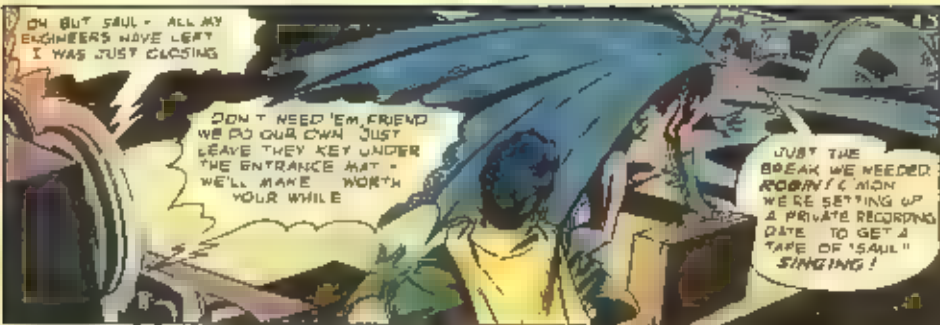
AFTER A CURIOUSLY TERSE DINNER...

EVERYONE REMAIN
SEATED--I HAVE A
SURPRISE!

ALFRED-- WOULD YOU
TURN OUT THE LIGHTS,
PLEASE?

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING





OH BUT SAUL - ALL MY
ENGINEERS HAVE LEFT
I WAS JUST CLOSING

DON'T NEED 'EM FRIEND
WE DO OUR OWN JUST
LEAVE THE KEY UNDER
THE ENTRANCE MAT -
WE'LL MAKE WORTH
YOUR WHILE

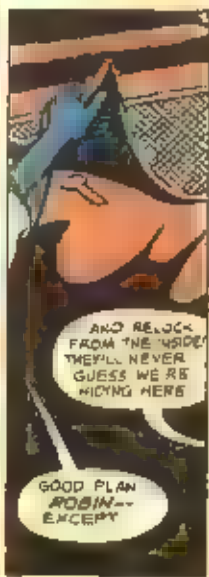
JUST THE
BREAK WE NEEDED
ROBIN & ALON
WE'RE SETTING UP
A PRIVATE RECORDING
DATE TO GET A
TAPE OF 'SAUL'
SINGING!



REACTIVATING THE BATMOBILE, THE
DYNAMIC DUO RACES AGAINST AN
UNKNOWN DEADLINE THEN PARKING
CU OF SIGHT

NEAR THE ENTRANCE
WAT HE SAID

SIMPLER THAN
"PICKING" OUR
WAY IN,
BATMAN! WE
OPEN UP--SLIP
THE KEY BACK
UNDER THE
MAT



AND RELOCK
FROM THE 'SIDE'
THEY'LL NEVER
GUESS WE'RE
HIDING HERE

GOOD PLAN
ROBIN--
EXCEPT



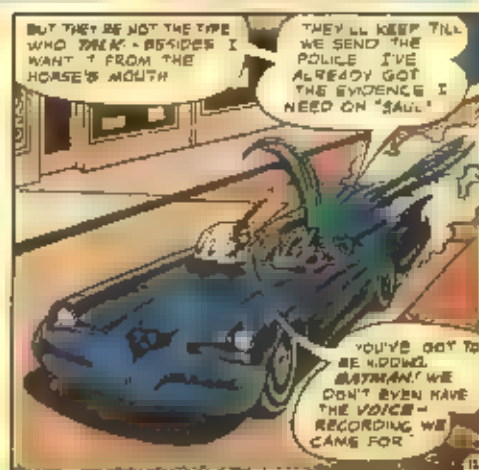
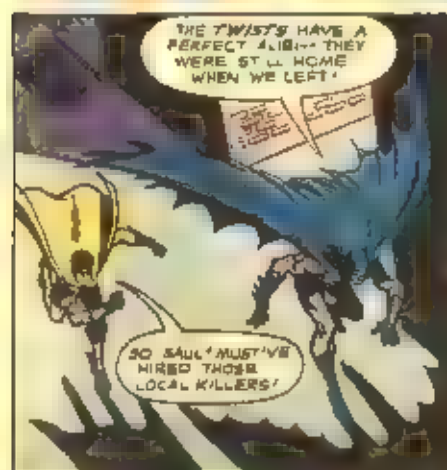
EXCEPT--
WHAT?

SOMEONE
ELSE



GOT THAT
IDEA FIRST!





SPEEDING BACK TO THE BATCAVE

AFTER WE LEFT HERE I REALIZED WE DIDN'T NEED A SINGING VOICE ANYMORE BUT I HAD TO FOLLOW SAUL'S "BAT" THROUGH TO BE SURE.

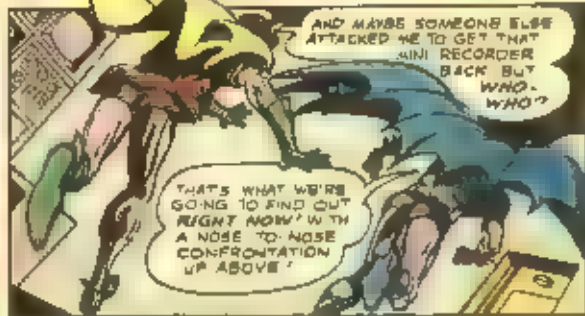
YOU FORGET WE NOW HAVE THE TALKING PHONE BUGGING TAPE - AND THE FIRST TALKING TAPE FROM THE CHANCELLER - BUG WE COMPARE THEM.



AND PROVE THAT SAUL HIRED THE

WHA? THEY'RE DIFFERENT?

THEN SAUL CARTWRIGHT DIDN'T MAKE THE SECOND CALL THE TRAP-BAIT ONE.



AND MAYBE SOMEONE ELSE ATTACKED ME TO GET THAT MINI RECORDER BACK BUT WHO? WHO?

THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT RIGHT NOW! WITH A NOSE-TO-NOSE CONFRONTATION UP ABOVE!

A SCENE OF APPARENTLY UNTRUBLED AT-HOME SLISS GREETS THEM!

CHUCKLE THEIR LATE SHOW SURE BEATS THE BBC, EH, SLICKES?

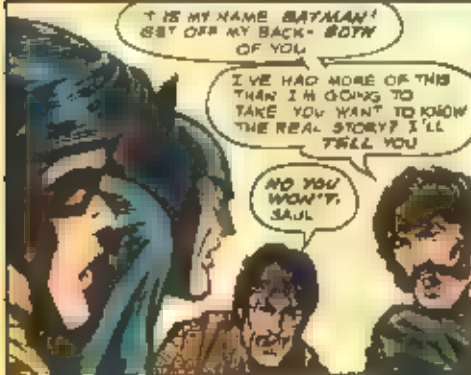
SAUL CARTWRIGHT! IF THAT'S YOUR REAL NAME



THIS IS MY NAME BATMAN! GET OFF MY BACK- BOTH OF YOU

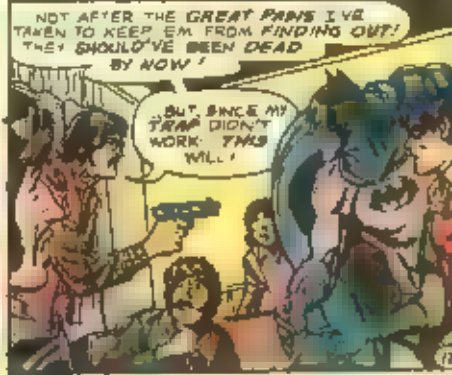
I'VE HAD MORE OF THIS THAN I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU WANT TO KNOW THE REAL STORY? I'LL TELL YOU

NO YOU WON'T, SAUL

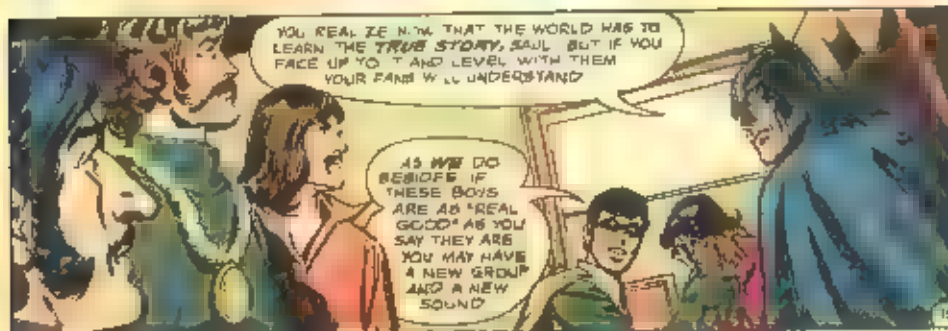
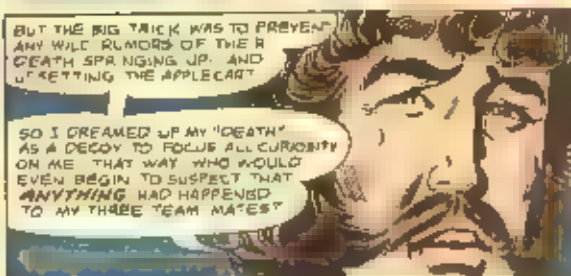


NOT AFTER THE GREAT PAINS I'VE TAKEN TO KEEP EM FROM FINDING OUT! THEY SHOULD'VE BEEN DEAD BY NOW!

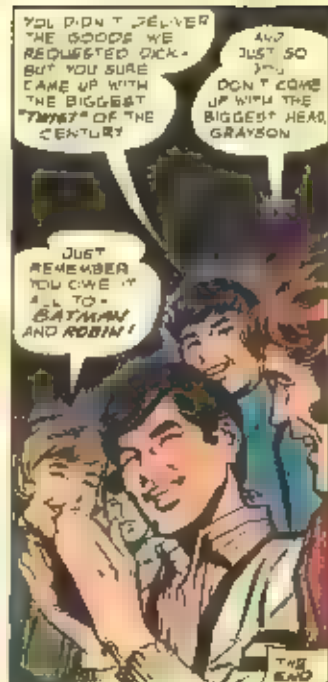
BUT SINCE MY TRAP DIDN'T WORK THIS WILL!



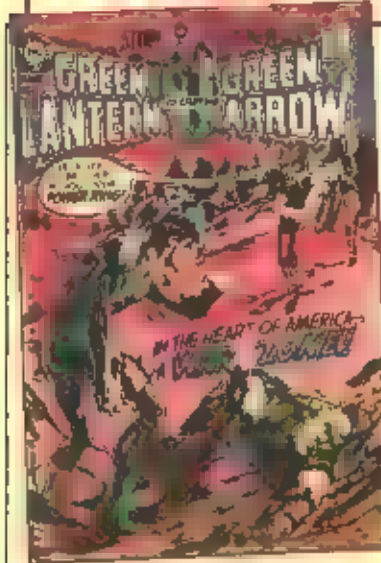




AND GO LIKE THE LEGENDARY BIRD THE "PHOENIX" A NEW SMASH
TEAM RISES FROM THE ASHES OF THE OLD A WEEK LATER AT
HUDSON U

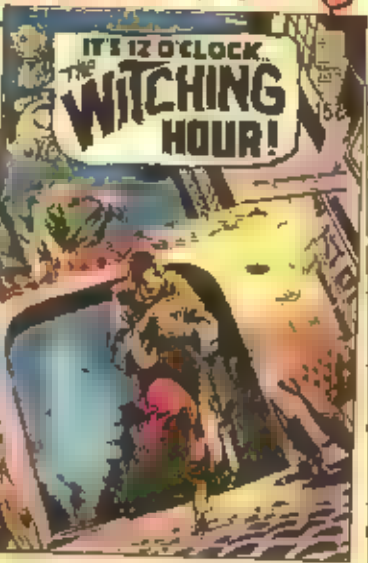


WOULD YOU BELIEVE..?



**TWO
EXCITING
DC
GRABBERS
TO HOLD
YOU
SPELL-
BOUND!**

**ON SALE
APRIL 9th - APRIL 16th**



SO YOU WANT TO BE A CARTOONIST?

by JOE KUGER

K-315

During my years as a professional cartoonist, I have been approached by many people (in addition to receiving hundreds of letters) who want more than anything else to become a **CARTOONIST** for **COMIC MAGAZINES**. Many of the letters included sketches or samples from these aspirants along with inquiries concerning **TYPE OF PAPER** to be used, **PAGE SIZE**, **PENS**, **INK**, etc. Of course, without this rudimentary knowledge, any attempt of creating a cartoon-drawing becomes extremely difficult and frustrating. In response, this page will describe some of the basic materials and information as applied to the comic industry in general.



PAPER & SIZE

Original art work is very rarely done "same size" as shown in printed form. The original drawing should be **HALF AGAIN** or **TWICE** the size of the reduced copy. **10" x 15"** (border-size) is the dimension used by our artists.

Paper should be **2-PLY** which is similar to a **LIGHT CARDBOARD**. Texture of paper can be **KID FINISH** (rough) or **PLATE FINISH** (smooth).

PENCILS

Preliminary sketches are done with a #2 or #3 pencil (lead). This enables you to erase for corrections without difficulty. **PENCIL DRAWINGS** are merely the first step toward a completed illustration.

ERASERS

NON-SMEARING is the desired quality in an eraser. Test your eraser on a piece of scrap paper **BEFORE** you use it on a drawing.

PEN, BRUSHES, INK

After completing your pencil **DRAWING**, it is essential to **GO OVER** the illustration with **INDIA INK**. The reason is that printing processes used to produce comic books demand a **CLEAR, SHARP, BLACK, LINEAR** drawing. If an ink line is **TOO GREY** it may not reproduce.

The types of **PENS** and **BRUSHES** vary, depending on one's own personal inclination. Pens may be **FLEXIBLE** (to give a thick and thin line) or **STIFF**.

Brushes will vary in size (#3 water-color sable brush is most generally used). After "inking", the pencil sketch is erased, leaving only the pen-brush-ink illustration.

These are the **PRIMARY ESSENTIALS** concerning material and information needed to begin to learn about cartooning. Of course, the **FIRST** prerequisite are: A **STRONG DESIRE**; **CONSTANT PRACTICE**; **STUDY OF ART IN GENERAL**, **COMPOSITION** and **FIGURE-DRAWING** in particular.

There are **NO SHORTCUTS**. Don't let your first attempts frustrate you—every professional cartoonist started in the **SAME MANNER**, as you are beginning right now.

Remember that all the combined talents of National Periodical Publications will try to encourage your efforts as much as possible—but it's really up to **YOU!** That is, if **YOU WANT TO BE A CARTOONIST!**



SLEET, SLEET, V
A TRAY AND
BLACK SHADE
ON THE ALONG
THE PRE DAWN
STREET'S.

A PAUL AR NET SPOCKY NIGHT IN
GOTHAM CITY BUT NOT TONIGHT
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE--!



ALL I GOT WAS THE BEST
CASE FOR ANOTHER

SLEET ME
BEAT E ERYELEN
A MY B... RYING
S T ER REST

AS KUENET STREET'S D... THE D... S... SOUNDS, THE



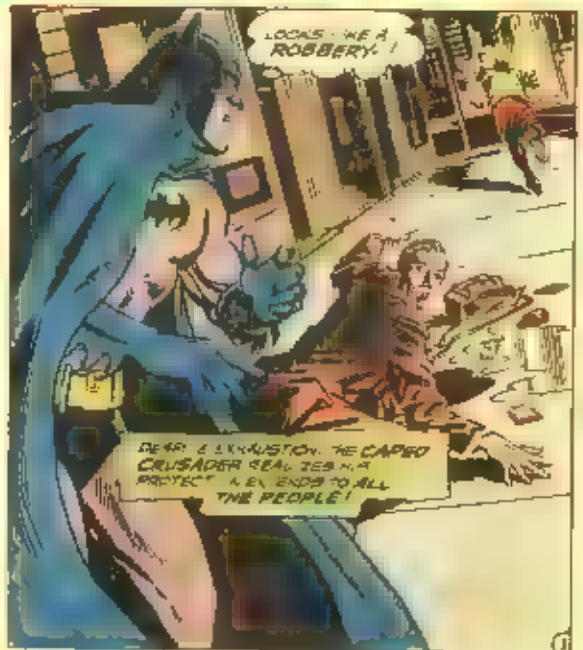
FIGHTS FOR... EVERY... FOR
THE LARK HEARTY D... WHO WOULD BLAME
HIM FOR WA... R... THE

"CASE of NO CONSEQUENCE!"



STILL ALERT TO EVERY SOUND, HIS
EAR PERKS

EH?



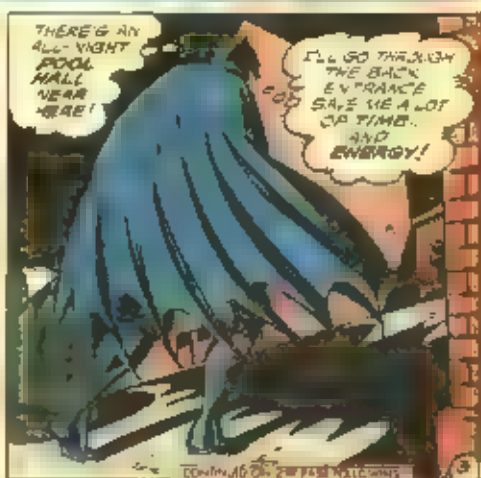
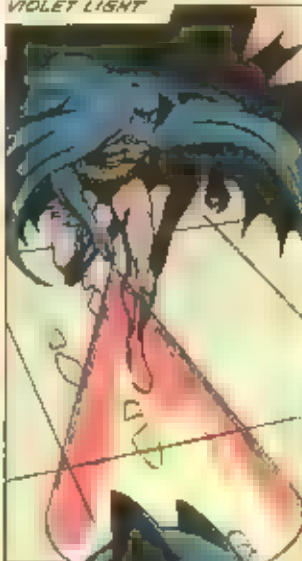
LOOKS LIKE A
ROBBERY!

DEAR EXHAUSTION, HE CAPED
CRUSADER REALIZES HIS
PROTECT... EN... TO ALL
THE PEOPLE!

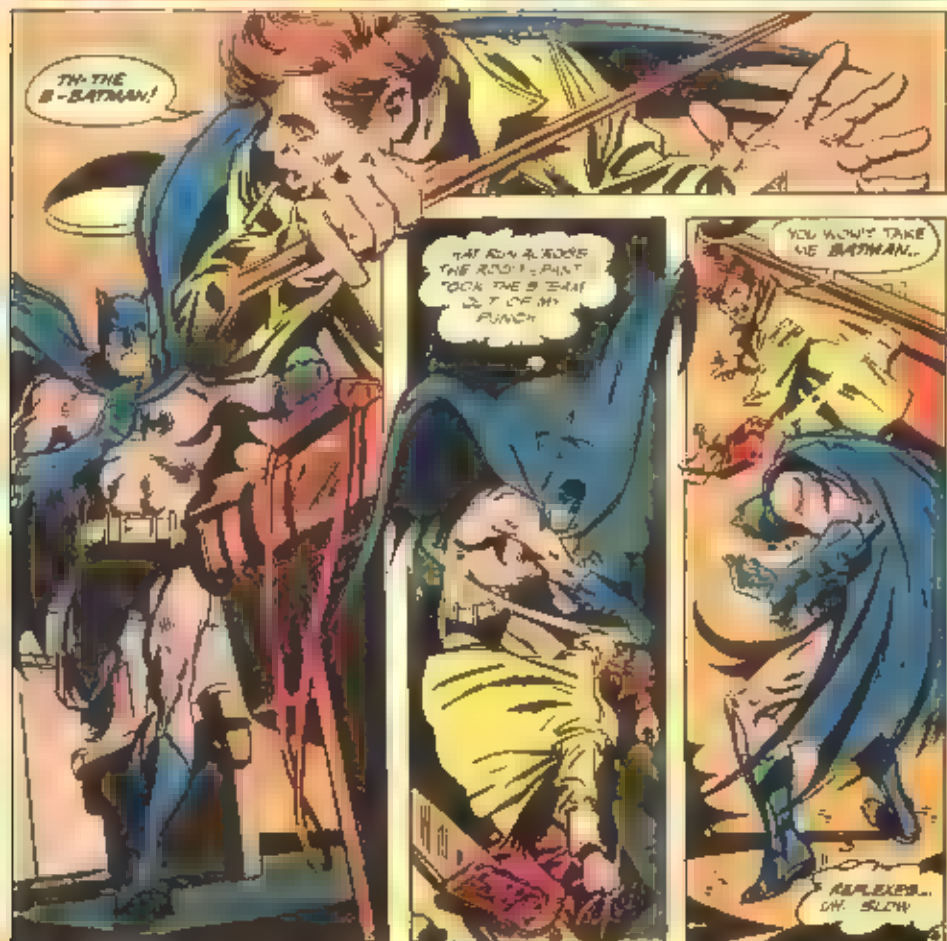


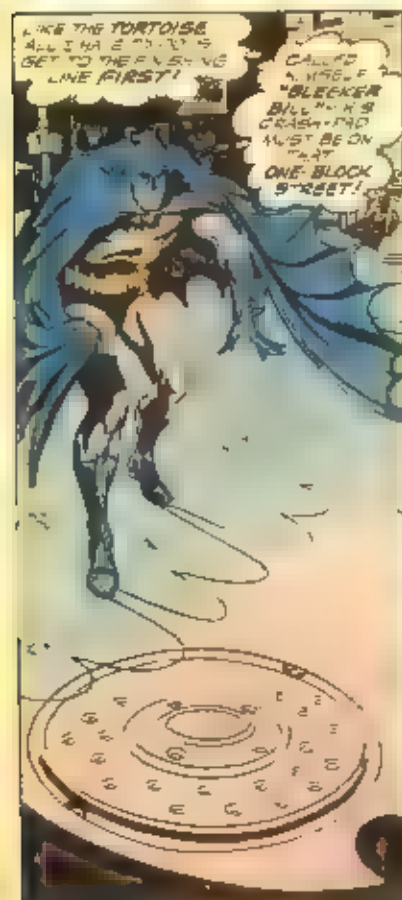
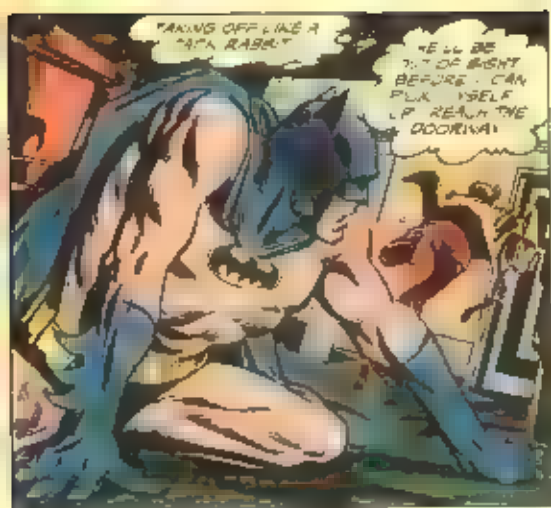


DELE. OF PAGE 4. AND FLOWS YELLOW
UNDER THE BATMAN'S ULTRA-
VIOLET LIGHT



CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



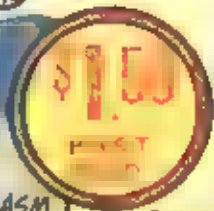
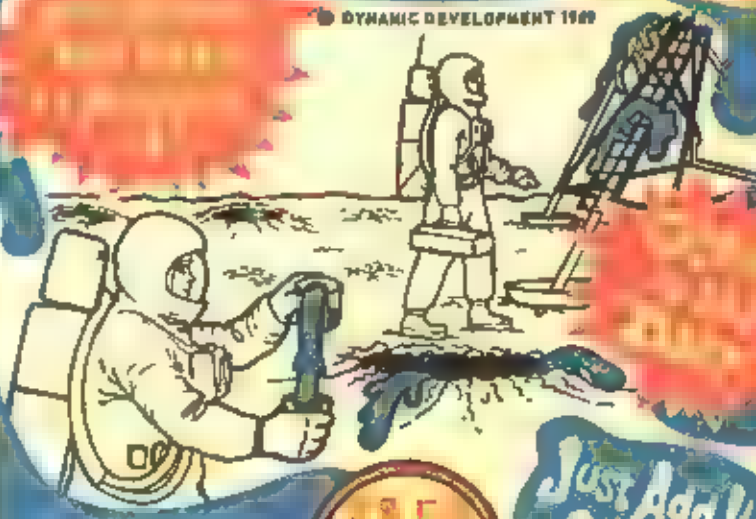


MAKE A MOVIE FEATURE

MADE IN U.S.A.

MOON-BLOB

DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENT 1969



Just Add Water

ORDER NOW

- IT ACTS ALIVE
- LOOKS LIKE PROTOPLASM
- IT'S A PLASTIC/LIQUID MOON CREATURE
- DEFIES GRAVITY
- CRAWLS OUT OF CONTAINERS
- DIVIDES INTO SMALLER BLOBS
- FREEZE IT-PUT IT INTO SUSPENDED ANIMATION
- LIVES INDEFINITELY FROZEN
- COMPLETELY HARMLESS

MOONGLOW-DEPT. 670
P.O. BOX 347
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, N.Y. 11571

PLEASE RUSH ME _____ ORDER(S) OF
MOON-BLOB AT \$1.50 EACH I HAVE
ENCLOSED _____ TO COVER THE
COST OF EACH SET ORDERED.
(SATISFACTION GUARANTEED NO C.O.D'S)

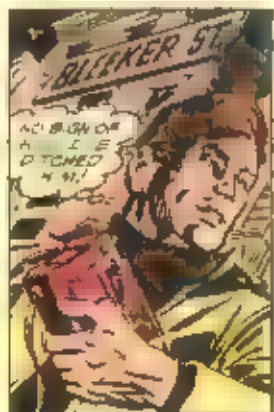
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CANADIAN AND FOREIGN ORDERS \$1.05
INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDER.

RUN BLEEKER BILL--UP A
5 FEET DOWN AN ALLEY
NOBODY KNOWS THESE
5 FEET BE 'E' N YOU
C?



RUN BLEEKER BILL AND DON'T
ST-- "GUESS YOU'RE SURE YOU'VE
FAKED OUT BATMAN!"



B. T--TOO BAD BLEEKER
BILL! YOU'VE FORGOTTEN
THE SHORTEST DISTANCE
BETWEEN TWO POINTS--

---A STRAIGHT LINE

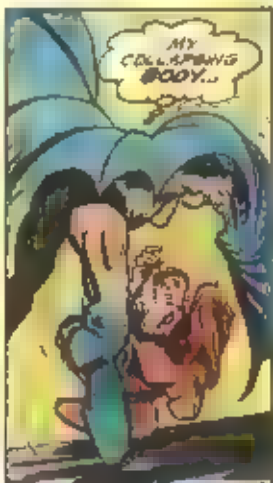


AIEEE!
NO--NO--

I'M TOO POOPED
TO WROIS
EVEN A
SINGLE
PUNCH.



SO I'LL
LET



MY
COLLAPSING
BODY...



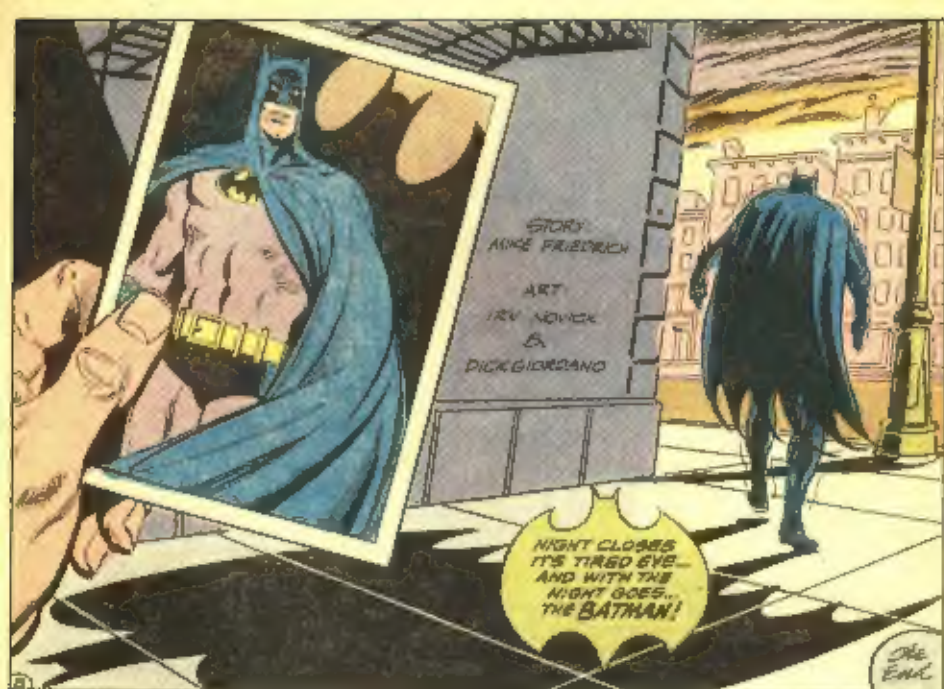
"DO WHAT MY
FIST CAN'T"

THE KINGS
OF THE
FIGHTING
ARE MANY--
BUT HE'S
AGU--HILL
TAK HIMSELF
TO HIS
LAST AND
BEYOND--
TO SEE
JUSTICE
SERVED,
ONLY



ALL THAT EXERTION
AND THESE MESSY
BULKS PLUS ONE
BROKEN CAMERA





n.p.p. presents: **THE NEW!**
THE DIFFERENT!
A G.I. YOU'LL NEVER FORGET!
THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER!



LETTERS to the BATCAVE



Dear Editor:

I just bought *Batman* #219 and, having finished reading it only moments ago, feel I ought to write you about it. Why? Because it is undoubtedly one of the finest *Batman* comics I've read in years. My collection of *Detective* and *Batman* numbers over 200 different issues, but few of them excited me as much as "Death Casts the Deciding Vote" and "The Silent Night of the Batman!"

"Death Casts the Deciding Vote" was written in the first person style, which immediately set it off as special; this style brought a sort of closeness to *Batman* and his thoughts that isn't achieved in the normal method of story-telling. The divided splash panel caught my attention right away, and my interest was sustained through the last panel. True, the bit about throwing the costume out as an "explanation" of panel 3, page 1 was a bit phoney...but that's my only complaint. Otherwise, I'd be content to have *Batman* stories of this calibre all the time. And, oddly enough, I didn't miss *Robin* at all! In fact, it just occurred to me as I write this that he didn't appear anywhere in issue #219!

"The Silent Night of the Batman" was totally different, yet captivating in every way. It carried with it the magic aura of good feeling that I associate with Christmas, a touch of sentimentality, the mysterious image of *Batman* that I love, and a charm that is not present in enough *Batman* tales. Neal Adams is perfect for drawing the Cowled Crusader, and Dick Giordano's inks complement the pencils beautifully. Artistically, I couldn't ask for more on any comic strip.

A few miscellaneous comments: First, the idea of two stories in an issue is excellent, and quite fresh after years of 23-24 page yarns. I wouldn't want this to be the permanent format, but every few issues, it would be a nice change-of-pace. Second, I hope this "new" *Batman* will meet up with the *Joker* and some of his older costumed enemies. True, he is devoting his time to corruption and more down-to-earth crimes, but the *Joker* could be fitted into this world without much trouble.

—BILL SCHELLY, U. of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho

(Next issue goes book-length again with Dennis O'Neill's masterpiece, "Carnival of the Cursed," an eerie tale that finds *Batman* on the hunt in New Orleans. No place for the *Joker* and/or his costumed cronies as yet, but they're bound to rear their ugly heads. —Ednor)

Dear Editor:

Batman #219 proves that you weren't just talking through your editorial hat when you promised us a newer, more exciting *Caped Crusader*. This issue pre-

sented your readers with the respective talents of Neal Adams, Irv Novick, Mike Friedrich, Frank Robbins, and Dick Giordano, as well as a 17-year-old DC Extra and a full 27 pages of reading material, excluding the lettercol. Match that, competitors!

Mr. Robbins' "Death Casts the Deciding Vote" was very satisfying, with its intriguing delve into the world of politics. At last Bruce Wayne and *Batman* are being treated as two different individuals: Wayne is the man, and *Batman* the legend. Very effective!

Meanwhile, Friedrich's "Silent Night of the Batman" was the most beautiful Christmas story I have ever seen published in the comics magazine medium. The individual vignettes were real and touching. The scripting and artwork presented terrific insight; the story's theme was inspirational. I feel nothing but admiration for a team of professionals like yourselves, who dare to break from the traditional super-hero mold to present such a meaningful and thought-provoking story. I reverently wish you all the best of luck and the happiest holiday season imaginable.

—STEVE BEERY, Alma, Mich.

(Your wish for the happiest of holiday seasons was fulfilled with the overwhelmingly joyous reception accorded *Batman* #219. There were a few sour notes, but before we tune in on one, let us carry on with another blowing of our own horn. —Ednor)

Dear Editor:

It seems like the *Batman* is here to stay!

Batman #219 brought the much-maligned *Caped Crusader* out from under the heavy mass of garbage piled up upon the *Batman* legend by the poor quality stories of the fifties and early sixties and the transformation of the 1964 *New Look* into the 1966 (ugh) *Camp Look* which killed a good effort by you and your crew to put some life into *Batman*.

First, there was the cover and the cover story. The cover was a brilliant, if not misleading, work by Neal Adams. I should have known when the cover has such a scene on it, in which the hero is in a position which for him is impossible to get out of, that it should be treated as a symbolic cover.

Now, the cover story, "Death Casts the Deciding Vote" was a nice, uncomplicated story. It gave Bruce Wayne a chance to show off his ingenuity by having the *Batman* and Bruce appear at the same time!

But, now, the second story! "The Silent Night of the Batman" was a definite move in the right story direction. I found it to be a very moving piece—*Alley Award* stuff, I'd say. The more-cynical-than-usual *Batman* reluctantly accompanying the Gotham police in the Christmas spirit while waiting for the inevitable call for action, unaware that his spirit is busy keeping the peace in old Gotham. It was a beau-

tiful statement and everyone involved with this issue should take a well-deserved bow.

—JAMES HAGGENMILLER, Jersey City, N.J.

Dear Editor:

Perhaps my hopes for the February *Batman* were too high. They were certainly soaring from the spell of the December *Batman*, which I regarded as nothing less than the best comic magazine ever to hit the market. So *Batman* is finally getting involved, I said. At last he has left his tiring years of super-science to others, and is now again concerned with the common man on the streets. Again he is the man of a thousand faces, living with crime and fighting it at its roots. Finally he is renewing his origin and living up to his namesake, I said.

But suddenly came the February *Batman*. And, I said, what happened to the streets? Where is the common man, where even is nighttime, the time of mystery, the time of the bat? Where is the common criminal? Certainly none of these is to be found on an airplane headed for Washington, D.C. Politics on the national level is no place for a thief, for a mugger or a murderer. Then why is the *Batman* there, if his cause is now with the dangers facing everyday people?

It seems that Frank Robbins' idea for the story was that social activity involves political activity; that anyone, including the *Batman*, who fights for social justice will inevitably be drawn into the arena of politics. Perhaps this is true; but as a story featuring the creature of the thousand eyes, this idea is found wanting. Here we are asked to believe that because politics is the official record of the American dream, it is just as gripping, just as immediate as day-to-day life in the city.

But surely there is enough drama going on in the streets where the line is thin between life and death, where the fight concerns everyone who enters a city, to draw involvement for both the *Batman* and the reader. And surely anyone who has been to a political event knows the yawns hanging over every word, has felt the heavy eyebrows of the speaker. And surely Frank Robbins has imagination enough to pit nightman against night-fears without going into the overgrown complexities (such as a blown-up *Batman* suit flying over Washington D.C.) as he has created in the February *Batman*.

Robbins proved beyond doubt his imagination in the December *Batman*. My trust still lies with him; but the new *Batman* needs city streets—or at least darkness and mystery—to operate in, and involved stories will no longer work. So I leave my trust with Editor Schwartz to see that the *Batman* is guided back to the quiet excitement of the city.

—EDWARD BRODERICK, Arlington Hts., Ill.

(To negate the negative—at Johnny Mercer once advised us—accentuate the positive, as we promptly proceed to do next.—Editor)

Dear Editor:

Batman #219 was an excellent issue. Your whole staff deserves congratulations. Congratulations. This is, in my opinion, the finest comic you have produced since the price rose to 15¢.

The cover depicting a scene from "Death Casts the Deciding Vote" was superbly done by Neal Adams. Notice the lack of balloons, the simplicity of the idea, and the excellent coloring, not to mention the well-placed title. Good show.

"Death Casts the Deciding Vote" A good title. A good plot by Frank Robbins. I like the idea that the bulk of the story occurred in the confines of a plane, rather than somewhere in Gotham City, then back to Wayne Manor, then to the police station, then to a giant statue factory, and back to Wayne Manor for a lousy closing pun by Dick Grayson (glad he's gone). This is usually the pattern of a regular *Batman* story. Ah, but this is no ordinary story. Thank you for a fine story, Frank Robbins.

The art was excellent, as it has been ever since Dick Giordano joined the team, and Giella left. Giella's inks didn't do much for Novick's pencils. (Don't get me wrong! I liked Giella-inks when over Infantino-pencils.)

Now for the second story. I usually don't like two stories in one issue. It breeds incompetence. But this time I was delighted. "The Silent Night of the *Batman*!" Excellent title. Excellent cinematic art by the incomparable Neal Adams. I immediately sensed it was written by Mike Friedrich. He really knows what the fans want, being one himself for many years. Good work. I can only say that the reaction to this story will be one of ecstasy. I know mine was.

—ROB MEUER, Madison, Wis.

(For possibly the first time ever, there was unanimous approval of a *Batman* story! To round out this column, we offer a sampling of these praiseworthy comments.—Editor)

"The Silent Night of the *Batman*" epitomized the feelings of Gotham City toward *Batman*. It is because of stories like this that the *Caped Criminalologist* has risen far above the multitude of comic magazine characters to become an almost legendary figure. I firmly believe that every major city could use a *Batman*.

—MIKE W. BARR, Akron, Ohio

As I write this, the days are growing steadily colder, there is talk of snow, Christmas decorations are appearing with amazing rapidity, and my feelings toward the trepidations of life are mellowing greatly. I have just finished reading your wonderful Christmas story, "Silent Night of the *Batman*." To a guy in a strange city, trying to get some minute amount of education pounded into his head, and facing hardships he never knew existed, it was a bit of inspiration that just can't be found anywhere else.

—JOHN WORKMAN, JR., Vancouver, Wash.

There just are not words to describe "The Silent Night of the *Batman*." It is, without a doubt, the BEST *Batman* story I have read in my 5 years of uninterrupted reading. It was drawn...superbly. I can't even state a "best" panel or page; they were all top-notch. Of the 35 panels in the story, only 9 needed "word balloons", proving that they were not necessary for this fine piece of work. If the story had been written to accommodate 15 pages (or more), I shudder to think of the consequences. It was perfect...just as it was...positively NO flaws. I wish that "The Silent Night of the *Batman*" would turn out to be non-fiction...soon.

—JEFF RISTINE, Ann Arbor, Mich.

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